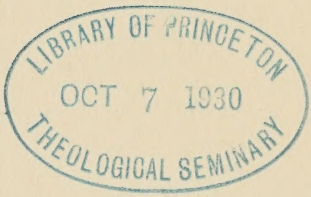

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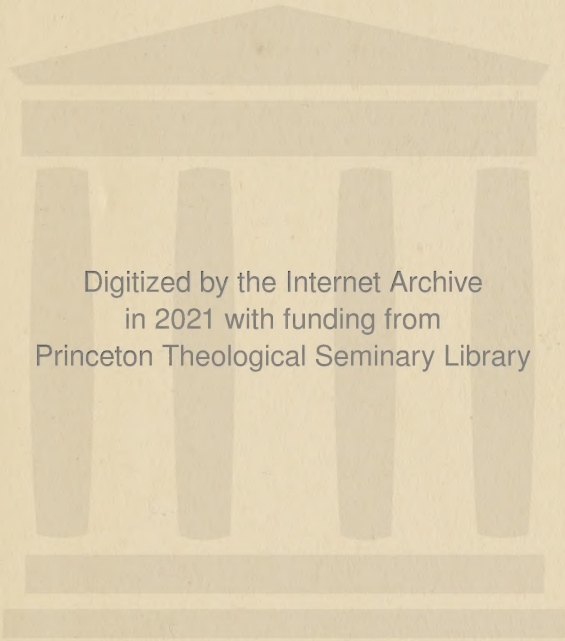

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THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY AND WESTERN CIVILISATION

BY

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1883

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. . . . The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY AND WESTERN CIVILISATION

THE accumulated and manifold testimony of thinkers and seers throughout the centuries has clarified the idea of Immortality. Poets and philosophers, prophets and saints have proclaimed their faith, now in wistfulness, now in confidence, pointing, like pioneers of the world to come, to a hinterland where their longings or purest joys may be realised in fulness. Therefore the modern man who comes to his own conclusions in favour of this belief, has more stimulating and confirming support in literature than his predecessor, so many have there been of faith and vision who have attempted "to steer the human soul into the unknown." Though

thinking people on the whole take care of themselves, and indeed it is one of their prerogatives to do so, conversation on high themes with one's associates may crystallise what lies in solution in the mind as it meditates in solitude. Wherefore to reflect aloud out of one's experience or faith may on invitation become a duty to one's fellows. A word from a contemporary, perchance, who believes that the road will not lead at nightfall into a trackless moorland may cheer some wayfarer on stretches of his journey which he is travelling alone.

The multitude of people, smaller proportionately to-day by most accounts than formerly, who have their minds toned and coloured by the institutions of religion, profess as obvious the belief that man will live after death; nor is there adequate ground for saying that their faith is likely to vanish as a wraith before the dawn of modern illumination.

There may be a dearth of prophets, but there is no lack of reasonable men who have discovered nothing in the new knowledge which makes it harder than it has always been to believe that if a man die he shall live again. It is not to be laid to the growth of science that the faith of some, as of many who have gone before, waxes cold, nor is the present intellectual climate so stormy as to bring down more windfalls than usual.

The belief in Immortality cannot be assumed to be a fundamental principle of the human mind which makes such a direct appeal as to need no proof. It is rather a conception which lies as a desire or hope in the heart of man, an intuitive apprehension which becomes clearer and gets new persuasiveness by the process of pondering upon it. Indeed, as has been remarked already, the meaning of the conception has been clarified through the process of history, and the attitude of the

thinking man of the twentieth century towards the Present and the Hereafter is different from that of his predecessors. Of course the climate of the human soul has been variable, but, for all the change, it seems to be as healthful now as it has ever been. Such a slight survey of western civilisation as can be given here, will, I think, show a development of idealism, but also that eras of material prosperity and self-confidence have been rather unfavourable to interest in personal Immortality.

In the hey-day of Athens the religion of Apollo was at its height and men took reason as their guide. "The spirit of the Iono-Attic enlightenment and philosophy stood on its own feet and was irresistible." [1] To the idea of another world and a life beyond they paid little heed. The Greeks of that period "believed that human reason could, and sometimes did

[1] Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Apollo*, p. 42.

achieve its end on earth."[1] But they were also only too well aware of the limits of human destiny, and the clouds of melancholy often threw their passing shadows across the summer scene. Both in Pindar and in Sophocles, most representative of their time, the same note of pensiveness recurs. "Alas ye generations of men, how mere a shadow do I count your life. Where, where is the mortal who wins more of happiness than just the seeming, and after the semblance a falling away?"[2] The Hellenes were devoid of any such hope as is embodied in the modern conception of progress; at best they thought of recurring cycles. Nevertheless in their prime they triumphed over the visitations of sadness induced by the sense of their finitude, they took their joy in the present and kept the future at arm's length. But

[1] R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius*, p. 113.
[2] Sophocles *O. T.* 1186–1192, Jebb's translation.

this classical phase was brief. Since the sixth century B.C. another religious type had been coming in alongside the Apolline in the Orphic communities with their doctrine of a future life, and grew so rapidly as almost to have dispossessed the other early in the Hellenistic period. After the death of Alexander the world became very unstable. Dynasties powerful to-day were overthrown to-morrow. Misfortune, sudden and catastrophic, lay in wait for the prosperous, the favourite of fortune lived in the sun for but a short space, reversals of success worked so ruthlessly that the philosopher sought to steel himself into *autarkeia*, or independence of the caprices of chance. Philosophy turning into ethics almost served as a religion, but it was "a makeshift shelter from the weather in a world where the old homes of religion had crumbled into ruins." [1]

[1] F. C. Burkitt, *Modern Churchman*, October, 1929.

Among a limited aristocracy of the Hellenistic world in the early Roman Empire astrological beliefs, a 'cosmic emotion,' acted as a purgative of earthly interests: "How should worshippers of the sky take delight in chariot races, or be seduced by the songs and dances of the theatre, they who have the privilege of contemplating the gods and of listening to prophetic voices? How utterly do their thoughts which move among the stars, scorn from the heights of this resplendent abode the gilded palaces and the pompous luxury of wealth." [1]

But ordinary people in larger numbers, impelled by the dread of events and a sense of guilt and sin, turned to revelation which they found in the rites and practices of the mysteries, and thereby were confirmed in a belief in the Immortality of the individual. Underlying the mysteries was the idea of redemp-

[1] Franz Cumont, *Astrology*, pp. 152, 153.

tion issuing in a future life. Beholding in the ritual amid impressive surroundings the drama of salvation, the initiated was changed into a new nature, as it were by some subtle divine essence which, almost like an antitoxin, had been infused into him, and he became *renatus in eternum*, reborn unto immortality. So he rejoiced in the spirit of his saviour god, was refreshed in heart and forgot the sadness and futility of his daily secular life.

In the Latin world of the last century B.C. and the half-century that followed, the prevailing conception of human destiny was not so individualistic as in the contemporary Hellenistic area. Hope that a City of God might be established on earth was held by many even in the chaotic decades that led up to the establishment of the Roman Empire. Stoicism, inculcating a high type of morals and allowing a place for the yearning for

Immortality, had won many adherents who amidst temporal losses kept their faith in character as a permanent possession.

Virgil, the supreme poet of that and many following ages, sang into the hearts of multitudes who had no philosophy, the faith that the civilisation of Rome under Augustus, based upon the divine ordinances of *fides* (trustworthiness) *justitia* (equity) and *pietas* (duty to God and man), was to spread among the nations. "'The sweet sense of futurity' runs all through the Aeneid, filling the mind of the Roman reader with hope and confidence."[1] But how often Aeneas, the ideal ruler, was thwarted, and his *pietas* made of none effect. There was a sense of guilt both in Virgil and in Horace which had not been dissipated by their robust hope for the *pax romana*, the

[1] W. Warde Fowler, *Aeneas at the Site of Rome*, p. 126.

peace maintained by Rome. In Virgil's sight lay the city of Rome, the product of the longest civilisation then known, in her splendour and shameless luxury for the few, while the many lived in crowded tenements in wretchedness and slavery. Yet it was in the cities that was to be found whatever there was of ordered life. In the half civilised pagan villages of the countryside and in the regions beyond, tumults, disasters, wars were renewed with paralysing frequency. Did this reign of cruelty not shatter the hope that Providence was bringing in a rational commonwealth, and induce a sense of failure?

> Thou majestic in thy sadness
> at the doubtful doom of human kind.

Virgil, however, creates new inspiration for Aeneas by causing him to receive, through a revelation of the mysteries of life and death, enlightenment as to what

lies beyond the "dark portal at the limit of thy human state:"

"Now at length, this fully done, and the service of the goddess perfected, they came to the happy place, the green pleasances and blissful seats of the Fortunate Woodlands. Here an ampler air clothes the meadows in lustrous sheen, and they know their own sun and a starlight of their own. . . . Here is the band of them who bore wounds in fighting for their country, and they who were pure in priesthood while life endured, and the good poets whose speech abased not Apollo; and they who made life beautiful by the arts of their invention, and who won by service a memory among others, the brows of all girt with the snow-white fillet." [1]

Long after the dream of the Empire had faded like an unsubstantial pageant,

[1] *Aeneid,* VI, 638 . . . 665, J. W. MacKail's translation.

Virgil carried through Europe "a significance well nigh equivalent to that of civilisation itself." (Comparetti.)

On passing to the history of the Jewish people the transition is from the visionary to the tangible, from a dim hope to prophetic certitude. In the prosperous times of the Old Testament the Hebrew prophet found satisfaction in the earthly kingdom; only the individual prophet or psalmist sang in the rapture of contemplation of Jehovah, "I have no good beyond Thee; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Throughout their history the Jews set their mind upon worldly virtues: as Klausner says, "Judaism is not only religion and it is not only ethics; it is the sum total of all the needs of the nation, placed on a religious basis. It is a national world-outlook with an ethico-religious basis." The beginning and end of religion was the fear of the Lord and the observance of the Law

which He gave them as His people. Asceticism was, except sporadically, alien to Jewish piety. His Law was eternal, and if the Word of the Lord was to be established there must be an external society in which that Law would be fulfilled. This community must have a national abode; Jerusalem was the centre with its Temple where the Shekinah dwelt. But when City and Temple were in the hands of its enemies, it was impossible for the scattered communities to observe the eternal Divine Law as it should be observed in the perfect obedience of the people of Jehovah. Yet with clouds settled thick upon their earthly fortunes their prophets and seers did not lose faith, but proclaimed that the Day of the Lord, a day of judgment upon their enemies, and a day of realisation of the Kingdom, was at hand. That Day, however, lingered; the righteous in age after age were slaughtered, death carried

generations away who had been unable to fulfil the precepts of the Torah. Therefore in the Day of the Lord the righteous would be brought back from the dead; there would be a new heaven and a new earth in which the Divine Law with its traditional worship and customs would be perfectly observed by the people of God. In this resurrection soul and body would come together again not as a solitary individual, but as a righteous Israelite in the re-constituted nation. After the culminating disasters of 70 A.D. and 135 A.D. when Jerusalem was wiped out, strange to say the Jewish religion survived in a more purified form, indeed in a new development, throughout the first centuries of the Christian era, the age of the Tannaim.[1] The Pharisaic and the Talmudic hope at its best was no ignobly selfish desire for individual salvation; the 'righteous' Israelite fulfilled

[1] See George Foot Moore, *Judaism*, 1928.

his daily observances, and he did not need to dwell much upon the Hereafter. That would come according to the Divine Will, and when it came it would be a sublimated present in which there would be a more perfect community for the worship of Jehovah.

Out of Judaism arose Jesus, the 'impression' of whose Person on the world in respect of religion, morality and the hope of a future life was so powerful as to create a new era in history. Jewish writers, as recently Klausner, have criticised Him and the religion which He founded, for having no interest in civic virtues: "Jesus left the course of ordinary life untouched — wicked, cruel, pagan. . . . He cared not for reforming the world or civilisation: therefore to adopt the teaching of Jesus is to remove oneself from the whole sphere of ordered national and human existence — from law, learning and civics, from life within

the State, and from wealth in virtually all its forms." Montefiore also holds that, "the greatness and originality of Jesus consists in the intensity, the absoluteness and the unqualifiedness of the religious demand. The present world, this aeon, is not its veritable sphere. Its true place is the sphere into which the consciousness of Jesus lifts him up." This, however, is to be borne in mind, Jesus lived His few years at a time when disaster was impending on the Jewish people, and He was convinced that the Jewish state was fast approaching its end. His nation's treatment of Himself and His message was a token of its rejection by God. It was past reformation; the institutions of religion were breaking up in His sight and the nation itself was in dissolution. The burden of His teaching was that here and now the new era of the Kingdom of God had begun, and in it His followers might enjoy 'eternal

life.' This hope was something so different from Jewish nationalism that He insisted on His disciples not entangling themselves in the secular affairs of their compatriots. At all costs they must escape the doom that was descending upon the Jewish nation as such. He forbade them look for His Kingdom as a renewal of the old, reformed but on the same foundations. What the remoter future of His flock was to be lay in the Will of His Father. About it He said little: sufficient for the present that it would not be a revived Jewish nation. And history has shown that Christianity was something different from Judaism. Though the early Christians claimed that they were the real Israel, it is true to describe, as Professor Burkitt does, "Christianity and the Rabbinical religion alike as daughters of the Old-Jewish religion, the religion of the Old Testament, the re-

ligion of the Maccabees and their followers." [1]

Following on the death of Jesus there was manifested in the circle of His disciples strong conviction as to the reality and character of a future life, which both on its scale and in its intensity belonged to a different order from any similar previous belief. The hope of Immortality sustained by the mysteries was faint as compared with the passionate faith of the early Christians. The mysteries have passed away; but however great have been the failures of the Christian religion to conquer civilisation, however crude and even immoral have been the pictures of the future state, there has reigned as a fundamental truth within the Church faith in the reality of another world into which each soul shall enter at death. The primitive Christians, of course, believed in it more vividly than most of

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1930, p. 267.

those in succeeding generations, because they claimed to have experienced power which was a foretaste of the world to come. They felt that they were separated by a mere hand-breadth from the real world into which their risen Lord had gone; they were confident in intimations breaking through the curtain of the visible from the City that hath foundations. Their heart and their treasure were both secure beyond the vicissitudes of the present. Though common folk they possessed the buoyant *autarkeia*, or self-sufficiency, which in the Greek world had been attained only by a few philosophers. Along with this was to be found in their communities an ethical creation of extraordinary richness. Love became a motive of surpassing efficacy in conduct, and its supreme place in the new religion is shown by the breadth of the vocabulary for virtues entering into a lovable disposition — goodness, be-

neficence, compassionateness, liberality, long-suffering, gentleness, self-restraint, fidelity, purity, chivalry towards women. Most of these virtues may not have been new, but in their profusion they displayed a rich life in the present, an earnest of richer to come, the fruit, as was believed, of the Spirit of God, Who was perfecting through love the redemption of the individual soul for His eternal Kingdom. The Christian Church had to meet opposition and to adjust itself to new conditions as it spread rapidly. But it clung to the belief that it was living in a very transient world, that its Master would soon return; therefore its eyes were directed more to the future than to the present. The Hereafter was central in its thought.

The greatest of all the Christians, the apostle Paul, soon found a challenge in the Roman Empire. As he left the circle of Jewish life in Palestine and in his early

home in Asia Minor, he became dominated by the idea of a mission to the Gentile world. Through Ephesus, Thrace and Greece as he went westward he realised ever increasingly the magnitude of Imperial Rome, and came to feel that to conquer that Empire for his Lord would be a greater proof of the power of his gospel, than to watch the discomfiture of His enemies in a crashing universe. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; so he made for Rome, and Christianity began to be a world power. "Paul has unconsciously completed the legacy of Alexander the Great." [1] Though in his major epistles the idea of the Day of the Lord grew dimmer, at that stage any *rapprochement* between Christianity and civilisation was rudimentary, and Paul's controlling hope is for eternal life in a new sphere: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

[1] Quoted from Wilamowitz by A. D. Nock.

which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal."

It was not until the third century that the possibility of a reconciliation between the finest culture of Greece and Christianity began to take outline in the minds of its deepest thinkers, such as Origen, Paul of Samosata and Cyprian of Carthage. But the main stream of Christian life and faith flowed in a different channel. From primitive times Chiliasm, or the doctrine of the Messianic reign for a thousand years at the close of the world age, had been a widespread conception. Men were expecting the End, and in such a frame of mind they were concerned not with civilisation but with saving their own soul. Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) exclaims at the close of a long enumeration of the calamities that had befallen Italy: "What may be taking place elsewhere I know not, but

in this country wherein we dwell, events plainly no longer foretell the end, but exhibit it in actual process." And at the close of the year 1000 a panic seized men's minds, the land was left untilled, business neglected, culture despised, and the churches were thronged with men and women seeking to escape from the wrath to come.

Somewhere in the first quarter of the fourteenth century appeared Dante's *Divina Commedia* which is "a unique personal assimilation of the fundamental ideals of religion, philosophy and practical life which the Middle Ages had evolved up to that time," in fact "a mirror of its culture." [1] That whole period was preoccupied with the Hereafter, and its philosophy found fullest expression in St. Thomas Aquinas who, placing man's reason and the human soul as above all material things, looks for the culmina-

[1] Karl Vossler, *Mediaeval Culture*, II, 207.

tion of knowledge in the future world. Through him Dante arrived at his conviction of the supremacy of Reason and along with it the worth of the individual. Therefore the theme of his poem is the journey of the soul through the stages of this life, the process of purification at its close, and the future attainment of blessedness in the immediate contemplation of perfect Love. But though his goal is the Hereafter Dante is not in sympathy with the monastic ideal. He is intensely interested in the drama of his own times and believes that the Christian Spirit must be made to triumph over the world, so vivid, so distressful, so rent by factions and yet so patient of a glorious issue even in the present. He wishes to bring human life as it is here lived under the dominance of Christian virtue while its goal in the Hereafter must be kept in view ever more clearly. "In his *Commedia* the practical moral values of the

state, of the family, of civilisation, the subjective value of the individual conscience, the social value of the general welfare, and the individual ethical value of separate persons — all these are united under the strictly religious and Christian viewpoint of salvation in the other world, and are as far as possible reconciled with it and with each other."[1] But Dante like his age lived in expectation that the end of the world was not far distant, and in the spirit of his romantic and humanistic contemporaries, who found in mystical love the reconciliation of rationalism and faith, he regarded death as the gateway to a heavenly world where Reason itself is transcended in Divine Love. In fact Dante did live at the end of one world in a more real sense than he was aware of. The Middle Ages were in dissolution, and "the *Divine Comedy* arises out of the ruins of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, 215.

civitas Dei, a tragic song of the glory which at that very moment was passing away under the poet's eyes." The devotion of so many readers in our century to Dante is a suggestive phenomenon. Why should a poet immersed in the scholastic system and with his political and ecclesiastical creed, who took as his theme the passage of the human soul from a transient and evil world, attract the sympathy of intellectuals on this "everlasting tide of life and fertility"? Is it not chiefly because of his sublime faith in the glorious destiny to which under the guidance of love that soul can attain?

With the dawn of the mediaeval world, a new intellectual ferment, soon to produce revolutionary results, had become widely active, and alongside the Church and the Empire the University arose as an intellectual power. It differed in character in different countries.

In Italy Civil Law had since before the time of Irnerius, about 1100, become almost a new gospel of civilisation, and in the University of Bologna these studies were pursued under predominantly lay influence. "Secular culture rather than Theology or Philosophy was Italy's contribution to the progress of the human mind."[1] But for the most part the University was an instrument of ecclesiastical scholars, and Paris, the greatest of all mediaeval universities, was the theological centre of Christendom. The University had not as its conscious purpose to conquer the secular world and bring the flowering culture under the control of the Church. Notwithstanding the "enormous intellectual enthusiasm"[2] of the Middle Ages and the freedom which prevailed,[3] the genuine scientific spirit,

[1] Rashdall, *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, VI, 585.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 601.
[3] C. H. Haskins, *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, p. 360.

which quite untrammelled pries into the origin and destiny of all things, had hardly put forth its buds, and the Church's doctrine as to man's destiny had not yet been challenged. But when the earlier Renaissance of the twelfth century waned, the University served as the vessel to preserve and transmit the seeds of that fruitful age which sprang up more abundantly in the new spring and summer of the later Renaissance.

The world of Greece reappeared in the great Renaissance; a transforming view of the present was revealed by the recovery of an alluring past. Moreover a much wider stage for the play of human life was set by the adventurers who one after the other discovered hitherto unknown regions of the universe. To many it was a re-birth of paganism, a joyous return to a satisfying present world and the eclipse of Christianity. The other great movement of the new age was the

Reformation which shook the religious and political systems to their foundations; but the average humanist was not interested in the agitating doctrines of the Reformers. He was repelled by the insistent and jarring convictions of the sects and by their disparagement of the existing civilisation. He enjoyed the culture of the Renaissance, and believing in moderation, if inclined at all to religion, he associated himself with the aristocratic society of the Church whose stately investiture of tradition and art made an appeal to his sentiment. Yet Humanism was strongly represented among those who clung sincerely to the Christian faith. There was Pico della Mirandola in Italy, Erasmus in Holland, Colet and his circle in England with Sir Philip Sidney and Spenser, and George Buchanan in Scotland; and even official Christianity at Rome was able to adjust itself to the Renaissance. The preva-

lence of the spirit of Humanism, however, led most of its representatives to expand "the interval [before death] in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time." [1] Otherworldliness receded from the light of common day and a more genial beam was shed upon "a new Kingdom of feeling and sensation and thought." [1]

If the French Court of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries be taken as a mirror of the civilisation of the period, there were few visions from another world reflected upon its surface. The life that passed before it was brilliant, gay and sensual, and around the framework of the scene played a sceptical philosophy such as colours Montaigne's realistic etchings. Shortly thereafter Descartes in his new method made an absolute claim for the freedom and power of the unaided human reason unlike

[1] W. Pater, *The Renaissance*, pp. 252, 257.

any that had been put forth since the time of the thinkers of Greece. By degrees, through the efforts of French writers, the ground was prepared for the rise in the next century of the idea of progress. Having lost faith in the Christian religion they substituted therefor faith in human perfectibility. They believed that already the human race had advanced so far that enlightenment and tolerance would prevail, material prosperity abound and perfected man would recreate his paradise. It was, however, the indefinite progress of mankind as a whole that became a regulative factor in the *Aufklärung*, not the Immortality of the individual.

By this conception of progress the mind of the nineteenth century was prepared to use the emergent doctrine of scientific evolution, which is a biological hypothesis, to buttress and confirm its philosophic theory. If the race by in-

herent natural necessity progresses in morals there is no need for supernatural sanction, nor for any transcendent sphere by and in which the average man is to realise his completeness.

> On our heels a fresh perfection treads,
> A power more strong in beauty, born of us
> And fated to excel us.

Even until the War, the scientific spirit with its untrammelled philosophic method induced many who were earnest thinkers to dispense with the doctrine of Immortality as being axiomatic. They had come to believe that there is no necessary implication of non-morality on the part of those who deny it. Slowly also the comprehension of the insignificance of our planet in the universe led average men to strip off remnants of the traditional forms of their Christian belief as to the Hereafter, and the removal was a genuine gift of civilisation.

Contemporaneously also an enthusiasm for humanity disassociated from religious faith seized upon many of the noblest spirits, and a more widespread moral aspiration for a better social order in the present became manifest. Not, however, by any means always was this enthusiasm a substitute for the wider hope of a better world to come. But such narrow emphasis as had been laid in some circles of religious life upon the securing of individual salvation, was greatly lessened by the recovery, through the historical interpretation of the Gospels, of the conception of the Kingdom of God as a Realm in which the Divine Will is to be realised by the redemption of men as a society of the sons of God. Among multitudes also the fear of punishment became a less potent motive than it had been a generation before, and, in so far as they thought of the Hereafter, they genially believed that God would treat men decently.

To make generalisations is precarious, and it is unsafe to say that at the beginning of the twentieth century there were proportionally more than in the Victorian era who discarded the idea of Immortality. We must remember that the fundamental basis of human life does not change rapidly. There are the poor who will always remain poor, and those who are never free from pain, whose members cannot work in the bodily frame without agony. Probably the actual majority of mankind at any time suffer from poverty or anxiety or bodily or mental distress. Yet in spite of the suffering and disappointment, even when they see others satisfying their desires as they cannot, they do not rail on life as evil, but cling to an unquenchable hope that there is something better in store for them.

> I said it in the meadow path,
> I said it on the mountain stairs,
> The best things any mortal hath
> Are those which every mortal shares.

If in the decades before the War belief in Immortality was on the wane, it was not because most people were despondent as to the value of life, and in anger rejected the desire for any repetition of it, but for two other reasons, first the change in the intellectual climate and more than that their material environment. They lived in an extraordinarily self-confident civilisation. It lacked proportionate culture and was devoid of *aidos*, or reverence for the spiritual. Other eras have been affected with the 'inferiority complex,' but not that one. There were no clouds upon the hills, no mystery. In that atmosphere men's faces lost their softer tones and their eyes grew keen. Material success affected them almost to elation. It was but a step from this into the sheer paganism that was frankly admitted to reign in the great cities of western civilisation.

In 1914 the scene suddenly changed

when War in its most hideous shape visited the world. Just when civilised man was displaying as never before stupendous control over external nature he lost control over himself, and plunged headlong into an almost annihilating struggle with the most civilised of his fellow men. By the outbreak and conduct of the War the world of the twentieth century was far more shocked than any previous age had been by any previous war. Its atrocity, suggested and furthered by the applications of science, staggered the moral sense. For all his imaginative power and magnificent accomplishment this advanced, highly educated person of the twentieth century fell into excesses as brutal as those of any earlier age. International Law was no restraint, and, as much as ever, it was evident that *inter arma silent leges*, in war Law is speechless.

What the permanent effect of the War

will be on men's minds in respect of the idea of progress it is difficult at this date to speculate. Probably thus far it has been different on both sides of the Atlantic, and much more transforming in Europe, where the material framework of life was shattered, than it has been in America. Even the least cynical, chastened in spirit, are conscious of the futility of much that they took to be permanent gains of civilisation, and see in them a confused medley of conflicting ideals and incompatible desires. Thoughtful men still ask one another whether civilisation could stand the shock of another such war. Absorption in the pursuit of applied science having gone far towards destroying man's otherworldly temper and shrivelling up his capacity for reflecting upon transcendent things, he is groping among the ruins of the material disaster and does not yet know what to make of his world.

It is hard to estimate how the War has reacted upon the belief in personal Immortality. Undoubtedly in the days when Death was stalking through the earth, cutting down our choicest youth in swaths, the spirits of many cried out for their loved ones and found an answer in their own intense yearnings. Some also betook themselves to psychic activities. It may be, however, that these quickenings of buoyancy were counterbalanced by the depressing fact that all the reason and science and moral progress of the world did not prevent the War. Is idealism then of any avail? Are our hopes but dupes?

There is on the whole a brighter side to things. Though in this secular climate a virulent malaria has seized the patient, he is not dead yet. Of course civilisation is confused and inconstant, but within it belief in rational and purposive power is still its most energising motive. We are

going ahead trying to civilise the world by applying to it the processes and inventions which are the outcome of modern science. By its means we are building greater cities, greater ships, driving railways further above ground and below ground, traversing the world in aeroplanes. And even in these activities there is a germ of hope. The skyscrapers of New York are not necessarily towers of Babel. If men were compelled to leave off reconstructing material civilisation, and were shortly to be "scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth" once again, it would indeed be a madder race than we at our worst moments imagine it to be, that would be driven forth from the ruins of such magnificent evidences of the power of human reason. While the structures of our civilisation do not impress us as sublime like the greatest phenomena of nature, the contemplation of man's rapidly growing control over the

world awakens in us a sense of awe at the grandeur of the mind that has been able to accomplish what he has accomplished.

But our hope for civilisation is reinforced more strongly by the moral than by the material accomplishment of mankind. Very solid gains have been made. During the past two thousand years new virtues have been bursting into flower, often with rich fruitage. That these are due in the main to the impulse that came from the Founder of Christianity is my belief, but whether or not, it is a fact that the appreciation of the worth of human beings has developed enormously within Christendom. Revulsion against cruelty and the waste of life, as never before, is characteristic of the modern mind. Slavery and all forms of hideous traffic in human life are being eradicated on an international scale. The development of medicine and of public health, the relief of famine, and the generous response

to disasters are tokens of "man's redemption of man."

Even after that almost total eclipse of *Sittlichkeit*, or decency, which Lord Haldane thought he saw developing before the War, international comity is again shining forth with a brightness that has never been equalled. The League of Nations, the World Court, Locarno, the Peace Pacts are signs of a fresh moral order. Quite recently General Smuts said: "Looked at in its true light, in the light of the age and of the time honoured ideas and practice of mankind, we are beholding an amazing thing — we are witnessing one of the great miracles of history. . . . The great choice was made, the great renunciation was over, and mankind has, as it were at one bound, and in the short space of ten years, jumped from the old order to the new, across a gulf which may yet prove to be the greatest break or divide in human

history. What has been done can never be undone again. One epoch has closed in the history of the world and another has opened." [1]

Not the least of the results of the dominance of the scientific spirit in our time has been the moral integrity which it has promoted. Probably the culture of the age owes more to the genius of the physicist, the astronomer, the chemist, the biologist, and the historian who uses scientific method, than it does to professed humanists. And of all qualities honesty is most essential to the scientist. Like the old Greek he believes that there is a *nomos*, or a right way in which life works itself out, and that he can wrest this secret from the process of nature. He is more secure than any of his predecessors in the fundamental axiom that his universe is rational, that it will yield its secrets to his searching; but also that

[1] *The Times*, London, November 11, 1929.

"Truth is the most unbending and uncompliable, the most necessary, firm, immutable, and adamantine thing in the world," or, to translate old Cudworth's words into Huxley's phrase, he has a "fanaticism for veracity." Sheer honesty forces him to try to discover what the right ways of the universe of men and things are, whether in physical nature, or in the moral, the social and the religious spheres. Truthfulness should also compel him to state his case with modesty, for he is aware that hypotheses are shed like autumn leaves, though he knows that they will fertilise the ground and that the promise of spring will not fail. When despair settles upon the man of action the man of science is still blithe. He is investigating a comprehensible universe and takes long views; so at the end of his day he hands on his torch to others in good hope.

The prevalence of an idealistic spirit

in the modern world is the reason why Civilisation was not shocked fatally by the battering and wounds it received when its house crashed upon it. Its reserve of moral and intellectual vitality has been sufficient so far.

It seems to me indubitable that the moral consciousness is clearer and more imperative in a much larger number of people in western civilisation to-day than it has ever been. There are more things that are not done, not merely because social convention forbids, but because they revolt the mind of the modern man. And this sympathy and intelligent imagination are rooted in the conviction, most basic and potent, that man as man is of enduring worth. He who can penetrate so far into the universe, who can pursue disinterested ends for the welfare of his fellows, who can display such pure love of country or passion for an ideal as was done in the War, who can

sacrifice all the prizes of life in devotion to a cause, is surely so essentially noble that Reason would be more shocked now than it would have been at any time in the past, were it asked to believe that the destiny of such an one would end at the blank wall of death.

Individual Immortality is therefore based upon this, that there is some life worth perpetuation beyond physical death; that there are values in the experience of the individual so intrinsically excellent, that they demand a far wider exercise for their existence than the few short years of even the longest life on earth. If so, Immortality must be defined in terms other than those of mere force or vitalism that may give continuity to physical experiences. Not infrequently the fear is expressed that the hope of Immortality has been killed in the laboratories of the biologist and the chemist. With high expectations they

are seeking to create the living cell out of its elements, and some assert that if then successful they will have discovered the secret of life. If, however, and when man's creative genius has got so far, the life produced will be that which the botanist, the zoölogist, and the physiologist may study, and that life having been produced by him may also be destroyed by him. But that life even if by some inherent endowment it were to become indestructible, would not be the 'eternal' life in terms of which we interpret Immortality. Belief in Immortality arises in the hearts of those who think and can communicate their thoughts to one another. It does not follow 'deterministically' in every human spirit but is won as a man wins his own soul. It is, however, doubtful whether belief in the Rationality of human life has a more widespread sway in the minds of modern men than belief in Immortality. It too

has to be developed by exercise, and men do not abandon it because so often Civilisation is driven by reckless charioteers. Governments get into power and keep there only too frequently because of the effect of mere emotion or prejudice. The finely balanced person of good judgment makes a slight appeal to average voters. They turn from him with impatience to some pleasant fellow and dance to his vulgar tune. Is the economic order reasonable? The socialist challenges the cultivated classes as being unreasonable because they do not act upon his premises. Yet men do not lose faith in improving the social order. The better elements struggle on because they hope that the state will little by little use more wisdom in regulating itself.

Similarly in respect of Goodness. I do not lose my faith in Goodness because there are so few good men or even because the good men, so called, often ir-

ritate me. Unfortunately the good man is not unadulteratedly good, and human instinct reacts with great sensitiveness to the genuine quality. Possibly human society is moved by Goodness in about the same measure as by Reason. Reason and Goodness are seen all too frequently limping along like bedraggled or dust-worn prophets. The rulers of the world and the flesh threaten them with death and lower them into the pit, but in all ages, and in ours more than in most, there have been those whose conscience has stirred and aroused them to bring the bemired prophet again before the powers that be. At the worst the world has not been without those who have recognised that there is something imperishably authentic in the witness. In spite of all failures reasonable and good men believe that in time they will get the upper hand over the stupid and evil elements of society.

Belief also in the intelligibility of the universe is a modern growth. It is much stronger in the scientist than in the average man. But when the baffled listener is left behind by the astronomer, doing his best to popularise his researches and deductions, he does not on that account flout his master's reasoning. Instead he struggles on to keep him in sight, and by so doing wins new dignity and self-respect, and in the very process acquires greater faculty to understand. The more intelligent a man becomes the more does he trust higher intelligence than his own, and that in spite of the fact that scientific hypotheses are scrapped every day. The spirit of modern science is the daughter of this faith, and as it comes to maturity the superb intellectual structures of science justify the faith from which it has sprung.

While, however, improvement in the moral and intellectual character of man-

kind, and in appreciation of its inherent worth, may be admitted, the reply is often made: "Men are mortal; but ideas are immortal." This means that the individual disappears, but that truthfulness, goodness, love will continue so long as there are men on earth who will live truthful, good, loving lives. Further, on this assumption the realisation of these qualities may increase with each generation and century, but if and when the human race should disappear from the earth, not only the qualities but the ideas also would perish, for ideas are nothing apart from men. Surely this is an irrational assumption. Granted that in mankind in the mass the ideas of truthfulness, goodness, and love will by and by prevail over "the natural desire to possess tangible things," the average individual presently alive, who is but a unit in the whole may well ask, whether that is of any consequence to him. In-

deed is it not absurd to suppose that these intrinsic values, which at any moment have no existence apart from him and others like him, will go on increasing in worth and scope but will be finally blotted out, only a relatively short time, as time is measured in the universe, after he has been swallowed up in he knows not what? Why should there be any growth in such qualities if they are to disappear? If they were to become extinct by deterioration the process might be less shocking. But the Universe only adds insult to injury if it makes the individual mortal contribute to accumulating irrationality. Some one may say, however, that when the old man comes to his grave in a full age it is "like as a shock of grain cometh in in its season," but that the wiping out of well endowed youth at his entering upon life does create questioning. So often in the War we asked, Wherefore this waste? Much

of the best equipment and potential character of the race was thrown away while as yet there had been very little realisation of them. We tried to explain it by assuming that in the War such issues were at stake that the sacrifice of the best in their prime was little in comparison with the possible loss of the spiritual values of freedom. That answer, however, was not sufficient, even apart from the fact that similar waste is going on every day as disease cuts off our choicest. Because it is indeed a greater waste if the rich experience accumulated by a wise and good man over a long life comes to an end when he dies. If we were governed as much by reason as by sentiment, we should be more confounded by the thought that these rich treasures of old age were to be spilled out, than by the loss of the potential values of youth in what we call premature death.

Indeed, the fact of growth in character

and wisdom makes more incredible the assumption that death ends all. To assume that physical nature is so supreme and so indifferent as to put an end to such a perfected being as even the French Encyclopaedists dreamed of, is to reduce Reason to futility. On that supposition the more value the race acquires, the more irrational the universe becomes. If man had no hope of growth in virtue it would be less unreasonable for him to think that the little that he has is not worth preserving. But once introduce the idea of development, and you take away the foundations for rational and good conduct, if you tell him that when he is at his best he is knowingly to cease for ever his exercise of reason and his practice of the good.

It is quite a different story, however, when this individual, reflecting upon his own nature, wonders whether he can possibly be worthy of Immortality. In his

moments of depression he discovers in himself so much that is irrational, selfish, sensual, that he doubts his salvability for eternal life. Moreover, this mood is intensified by the knowledge that some men whom he respects as being better than himself, many also of the world's great thinkers, seem never to have felt the need of, or to have acquired belief in, personal survival after death. Their intellectual idealism proved to be for them almost a surrogate to faith in Immortality. But the dispirited questioner may take heart of grace in the presence of the goodly company, so many of them among the best and noblest of our race, who have clung to the hope of eternal life, and may with good reason interpret his highest aspirations as the vague outlines of a greater character that is to be.

To return to the assurance of Immortality which is involved in the presence in human life of qualities of permanent

intrinsic worth — Does not love carry with it the proof of its own indestructibility? At once we must distinguish things that differ. The word love is used to describe such dissimilar states of experience that often those who employ it do not understand one another. They do not mean the same thing. To explain its origin and nature solely in sexual and physical terms is incongruously insufficient. Of course such an emotion is transient. Like a fire it flares up when fuel is thrown upon it, then it dies down and probably long before the end of life's day the ashes lie cold upon the hearthstone, and aversion may have taken its place. But the world is not long deceived, and a reaction is apparent in recent writing by reason of the disillusionment which those get who have given themselves over to what is called the "freedom" of sensual desire: "To-day many are asking themselves 'What is [love] worth?' And they

are certainly no longer feeling that it is obviously and in itself something which makes life worth the living." [1]

What may be called the classical emotion of religious love, that is the manifestation of it in the writers of the New Testament, is so ideal that "the very depth of their devotion appears to have made them generally reticent about employing terms" [2] of "ordinary love-language" in their approach to the Most High. Such terms of endearment do abound, it is true, in Christian poetry, and saints throughout the ages have employed the sensuous imagery of the Song of Songs to express their yearning for God. More than that, as if to justify those who degrade the origin of love, there have been sexual extravagances among sects, and immoral phrensies the

[1] J. W. Krutch quoted in W. Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals*, p. 303.

[2] James Moffatt, *Love in the New Testament*, p. 161.

relics of which lie as startling skeletons in the history of the Church. But the essential nature of a person is not to be judged by his skeleton. Soaring above what is of the earth earthy was the disinterested love of the Spanish mystics in the golden age of the sixteenth century, who cherished their Lord without hope of any reward beyond the utter joy of the love itself. It was, however, an active love which did not rest in quietism but was zealous of good works, "a divine knight errantry" in some sort. And still the devout Christian who sings the praise of his Lord in words of human love, is recalled from his exaltation by the command to manifest that love in the world of every day life. The most emotional "salvationist" finds a field for his active love for his Master in the attempt to rescue his degraded fellows, of whose worth he is so convinced that he seeks unselfishly to promote their re-

demption both for this world and for the world to come. Therein his love transcends any impulse of mere "desire." That the love of the salvationist may sometimes fail, is only a parallel fact to the possible failure of reason and goodness in any one.

The purer love grows the less is its character determined by the "allure of bodily beauty," and in its intense flame the form is glorified until it becomes so interfused with essential personality that if love were to perish life itself would lose its value.

> Love's true passion is of immortal happiness
> . . . . . a gift
> whose wealth is amplified by spending, and its charm
> rejuvenated by habit, that dulleth all else.[1]

[1] Robert Bridges, *The Testament of Beauty*, III, 300 ff.

Love of this quality carries in itself the prophecy of its own Immortality. Those who love never have their fill of love. Is it not the negation of Reason if the lover is bidden to expect a final eclipse of the life in which he has realised so much that is completely satisfying? May I not trust the purest emotion of my heart when it tells me that love is imperishable? I trust my educated reason and it justifies me when I venture in confidence to explore the world of sense. I trust my conscience when it postulates the reality of goodness, and I am not put to shame. Unless the deepest things in me are reliable my being is without foundations.

To confirm my trust in the intimations of my heart I hold converse with the lovers of mankind, often quite simple folk of surpassing excellence, but also with prophets and wise men, poets and saints who have made their aspiration

real. For the Christian love reaches its certitude in his faith that God his Father has redeemed him with an everlasting love, and that nothing shall be able to separate him from that love. "And every one that hath this hope set upon him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

But whether definitely Christian or not, the hope of Immortality is rooted in man's experience of love, goodness and reason. The very nature of these qualities is such that the life which consists in their exercise must continue to be conscious of itself. That being so, questions as to where the life will be spent are irrelevant. Even the world of the present is not 'real' as the average man counts reality, for the physicist tells us: "The physical world is entirely abstract and without 'actuality' apart from its linkage to consciousness." [1] Whether or not

[1] A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 325.

a local habitation may be found for us in our future state among the vast spaces of the Universe, it is reasonable to hope that there is a Realm in which the company of those who have sought to know, to pursue goodness and to love their fellows and all things pure and beautiful, will find scope for the realisation of those desires in such measure as transcends our present power to imagine.

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